However, they are not interested in mining or processing titanium, but would like to assure purchase and encourage technology tie ups if we can set up a joint venture for mining and processing titanium in India.

(e) and (f) Yes Sir, a MoU was signed between the Government of Kerala and Rosoboronexport of Russia (a Federal State Unitary Enterprise) in May, 2007 to make use of Ilmenite resources in Kerala to manufacture titanium sponge and other value added products. A Joint Working Group has been formed to prepare a techno-economic feasibility report.

Creation of a SPV

1213. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that select PSUs are creating a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to acquire coal mines abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for such a step; and

(d) the countries which have been identified for such acquisitions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) to (c) A proposal initiated by Ministry of Steel for creating Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) comprising of Steel Authority of India Limited, Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited, Coal India Limited, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited and National Mineral Development Corporation Limited is under consideration of Government. The main objective is to ensure supply of imported metallurgical coal to meet the requirements of public sector steel plants who have undertaken massive expansion programmes.

(d) No country has been identified for acquisition of coal mines abroad by the SPV.

Non-utilisation of coal blocks

1214. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a Parliamentary Committee has criticized the Ministry of Coal for failing to ensure development of captive coal blocks allotted as back as 1998;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the lackadaisical approach of his Ministry in monitoring the progress of captive coal blocks allotted to different parties has resulted in non-utilization coal blocks for exploration of coal; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to develop the coal blocks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) Standing Committee on Coal and Steel on Demand for Grants

had observed in 23rd report that some of the coal blocks allotted as back as 1998 to 2000 have still not been developed and only 8 blocks have started producing coal. The Ministry of Coal in its reply to the Committee had, *inter-alia*, stated that of 19 coal blocks allotted up to 2002, 11 have already come into production and six more are expected to commence production during 2007. It was further pointed out that this fact was already given to the Standing Committee and was recorded in para 5.24 of the report. The Committee was further informed that the position has since improved on account of the measure taken by the Ministry such as intensive monitoring being done on regular basis, prescription of time-bound milestones, introduction of bank guarantee deposit system etc.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Ministry of Coal periodically monitors and reviews specific milestones laid down for development of coal blocks. In case of wilful delays, notices are issued and where warranted de-allocation of coal blocks is considered. Due to the following reasons it takes time to develop the coal blocks:

(i) The allocatees of coal blocks, who have not started production so far, are in various stages of obtaining statutory clearances and mining lease, preparing mining plan, acquiring land, machinery and equipments etc. for mining as well setting up end-use project. The progress achieved by them against certain given milestones is reviewed by the Screening Committee from time to time.

(ii) Development of coal blocks involves a long gestation period of about 3 to 5 years to reach production stage and about another two years to reach its optimal production capacity.

(iii) New players who enter the coal mining arena, take more time for organizing the pre-mining clearances and to develop the coal blocks.

However, the coal blocks are at different stages of development and by the end of the Eleventh Plan, these blocks are expected to contribute coal production of around 104 million tonnes.

Coal-mine accidents

1215. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of coal-mine accidents that occurred in India during the last five years, year-wise;

(b) the number of persons died in those accidents;

(c) whether Court of Enquiry was set in each case of accidents;

(d) if so, the major findings thereof; and

(e) the number of persons who have been punished so far for the negligence attributed to those accidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) and (b) The number of fatal accidents occurred in coal mines in India and persons died in these accidents during the last five years are given below: